

III.—*An account of Discoveries made in Celtic Tumuli near Dover, Kent.* By
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THE rarity of Celtic tumuli in the eastern part of Kent contrasts strongly with the comparative abundance of Anglo-Saxon sepulchral remains which have been discovered in that part of the county. One of the former, explored by Douglas,^a and a large and interesting barrow in Iffins Wood, near Canterbury,^b opened about thirty years ago by Mr. Bell, are, as far as I know, the only recorded instances of Celtic tumuli in East Kent.

The two barrows, from one of which the urns and vessels now exhibited were taken, are situated nearly half-way between Dover and Deal, in the parish of Ringwould, on the ridge of a high down within a mile of the sea, and command a view of the coast from the North to the South Foreland. They are 80 yards apart, 24 yards in diameter, slightly oval in form, and 4 feet 6 inches at their highest point above the natural soil.

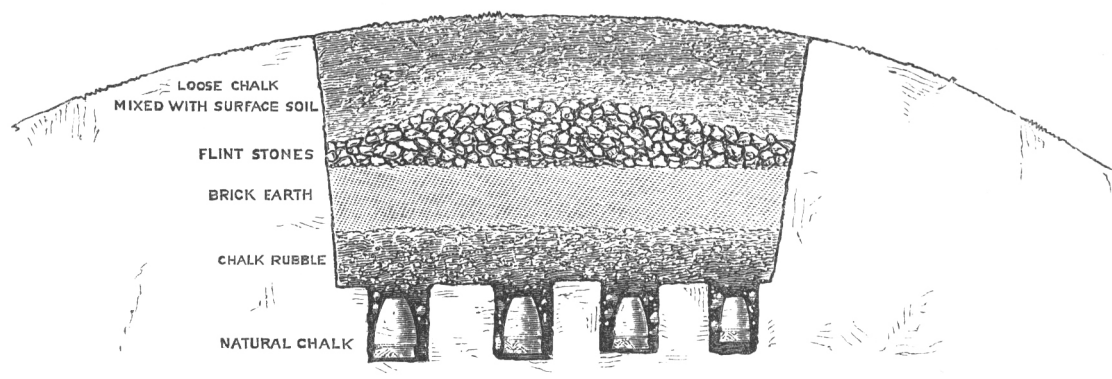
Excavations were commenced by digging a trench in the western mound from the north-west side, through loose chalk mixed with surface mould. About the centre, at a depth of three feet, we came upon a deposit of human bones bearing traces of having been burnt on the spot, without pottery or other remains. Continuing our researches to the east we removed a heap of flint-stones, which extended laterally for about ten feet each way; below the stones was a layer of brick-earth, amongst which fragments of charcoal occurred, and beneath the brick-earth chalk rubble covered the natural chalk to the depth of one foot. Amongst the flints and above them were some bones and teeth of a horse.

The accompanying section of the centre of the barrow will give an idea of its construction. On coming to the natural chalk we discovered the primary interments. Cylindrical cists had, in three instances, been dug to the depth of

^a *Nenia Britannica*, p. 158.

^b *Archæologia*, xxx. 57.

eighteen inches; in the fourth the chalk had been slightly undermined on one side of the cist, and a neatly arched niche formed for the reception of the urn; in each case the bottom of the cavity had been levelled with great care and precision, so that no interstices should intervene between the rim of the inverted urn and the soil below. The first which we uncovered contained the fragments of a large urn ornamented with a chevron pattern, the lines of which had been



SECTION OF CENTRE OF WEST TUMULUS, RINGWOULD, KENT.

produced by impressing a twisted thong in the soft clay. No bones were found with this deposit. The second urn (No. 1 in the annexed plate), which stood inverted in the above-mentioned niche, was extracted nearly perfect; it is slightly ornamented with vertical lines on the overhanging portion of the top and is thirteen inches in height. It covered a heap of calcined bones. The next urn had been completely crushed by the superincumbent soil; it appeared to have been about sixteen inches in height and had handles, and an impressed pattern similar to No. 2. Within this crushed urn was lying a small cup (No. 4) of the rudest workmanship, the mouth of which was stopped with a lump of half-baked clay. A somewhat similar cup was found in Dorsetshire filled with small birds' bones. (See Barrow-diggers, a Dialogue, pl. ix.) A few fragments of bones, apparently those of an infant, accompanied this interment.

The fourth and principal interment in the tumulus consisted of a large urn (No. 2), which fell to pieces on being moved, and revealed a heap of burnt bones, very white and dry, and two small vessels (Nos. 3 and 5), the larger of which (No. 3) is four inches in height, and ornamented with horizontal lines round the top, and an indistinct chevron pattern. The smaller, the mouth of which was covered by the bottom of the other, is two inches in height, and has an alternate



C. F. Kell, Lith. London.

URNS FOUND IN A BARROW, RINGWOULD, KENT.

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arrangement of vertical and horizontal lines round the upper portion. Near the bottom it is perforated by two small holes. It contained the remains of some burnt substance. Vessels of this class are illustrated in Bateman's "Ten Years' Diggings," pp. 281 and 283, as well as in Dr. Thurnam's elaborate memoir printed in the *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 357. Of the specimens figured by the latter our example comes nearest in form to fig. 53 from Clayton Hill, Sussex (p. 367), in which, however, the holes are replaced by slashes in the sides. The holes, which often occur in these cups, have been conjectured to be for suspension, but it seems more probable in this case, from the ashes inside, and from the fact that the top was closed, that they were formed to allow the escape of smoke.

The large urn (No. 2), which has been imperfectly restored, is sixteen inches in height, and ornamented with lines and the chevron pattern on the upper part. It had originally four projecting handles, or rather representations of handles, and may be compared with one figured on plate xxix. fig. 7, of Kemble's "*Horæ Ferales*," from Fifeshire. The projecting handles occur in the larger urns of Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall. We may mention, for instance, the urn found in a tumulus at Dewlish, Dorsetshire, engraved in Warne, *Celtic Tumuli of Dorsetshire*, plate iv. fig. 13; another from Roke Down, Dorset, in Mr. Durden's Collection, *Archæologia*, xliii. plate xxx.; and the fragments of urns from Duloe Circle and Morvah Hill, Cornwall, fig. 5, published in Borlase, *Nænia Cornubiæ*, pp. 128, 248. Amongst the ashes covered by this urn were four small beads of light green vitreous paste. (Plate VIII. No. 7.) (See Akerman's *Archæological Index*, plate v. 56 and 64, and also *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 495.)

All the pottery in the barrow was of very soft and imperfectly baked clay, which hardened on exposure to the atmosphere. Between the urns and the sides of the cists large surface flints had been wedged, together with chalk rubble. The western part of the barrow was next explored, but nothing was discovered on this side.

In comparing this tumulus with the one opened in Iffins Wood, of which an account appeared in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxx. p. 57, it is remarkable that in neither was anything found in the western half of the mound; in both, brick-earth occurred, which at Iffins Wood furnished the entire material of which the barrow was constructed, without any heap of flints, so usual a feature in Celtic grave-mounds.

The eastern barrow, on being opened, presented a very different appearance from its companion; chalk, unmixed, except near the surface, with any other

substance, formed the material of its construction, and the barrow seemed to have been prepared but never used for sepulture, prepared perhaps at the time when the interments were made in the western tumulus. At a depth of one foot from the surface was found a fragment of the rim of an urn, ornamented with irregular incised lines. (Plate VIII. No. 6.)*

I think I may be justified in inferring that these remains belong to a late rather than an early Celtic period. Burial by cremation, and the form of two of the smaller vessels, seem to point to Roman influences.

There are still, I believe, a few undisturbed Celtic tumuli in Kent, and I hope by a future exploration of some of these to gain more knowledge of their comparative antiquity.

* The material of this fragment is thinner, harder, and more thoroughly baked than that of the larger urns from the other barrow ; and from the position in which it was found it seems probable that it formed part of a domestic and not of a sepulchral vessel.